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# News Release



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## **HENDERSON'S CHECKERMALLOW WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR ENDANGERED LIST**

Petition to list does not provide substantial information, Service finds

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today that a petition to list Henderson's checkermallow as a threatened or endangered species does not contain sufficient information to warrant further review at this time. Henderson's checkermallow is, a coastal plant in the mallow family. It is found from Oregon to Alaska, with as many as 67 sites throughout its range.

The Service made the determination in response to a petition received in December 2003 from the Native Plant Society of Oregon requesting Henderson's checkermallow be listed as a threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Under the ESA, the Service is required to review the petition to decide whether it contained substantial scientific information that listing may be warranted.

"While there is some information suggesting that this species is declining in Oregon, there is also information showing strong populations range-wide, as well as a series of recent conservation efforts in place that preclude the need to protect the species under the Endangered Species Act," said Kemper McMaster, supervisor of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Oregon.

The petition contained detailed information on the natural history of the species, its population status, and existing threats to the species. The petition stated that the species was extirpated from virtually all locations in Oregon, and that remaining range wide populations are not adequately protected.

Since the petition was submitted, new information has become available. The Washington Natural Heritage Program conducted a status review of Henderson's checkermallow which indicates that out of nearly 50 historic locations in Washington, as many as 32 have stable or increasing populations. There are at least 30 occurrences of Henderson's checkermallow in British Columbia and one new population was discovered in Alaska in 2003. There are also four sites in Oregon; two existing in the Siuslaw River Estuary and two introduced in Lincoln and Douglas Counties. Oregon's population has the potential to increase through reintroduction efforts.

Henderson's checkermallow is a member of the mallow family (hollyhock, hibiscus, and cotton are also members of this family). Its scientific name is *Sidalcea hendersonii*. It is a perennial herb reaching a height of 1.6 to 5 feet (0.5 to 1.5 meters). Its pinkish-lavender to pinkish-purple flowers contain five separate petals and a column of stamens. The flowers are borne in clusters at the end of tall stems and the leaves are smooth rather than hairy.

The plant is found in the high salt marshes of the tidal zone, a habitat unlike that occupied by other members of its genus (*Sidalcea*). It occurs sporadically in coastal areas from Douglas County, Oregon to Chilkat Peninsula, Alaska. Historically, a major threat to the species has been habitat loss through coastal development; particularly the conversion of wetlands to grazing and agricultural land.

Currently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service classifies Henderson's checkermallow as a federal Species of Concern, and the Service will continue to monitor the species' population status and trends, potential threats, and ongoing management actions that might be important with regard to its conservation across its range.

Interested parties are encouraged to continue to gather data that will assist with the conservation of this species. Information or materials regarding Henderson's checkermallow may be submitted to: Field Supervisor, USFWS-Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office, 2600 SE 98<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 100, Portland, OR 97266, or via FAX at 503-231-6195.

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.